(ii) Shri Naveen Patnaik — Minister of Mines and Minerals

(iii) Ms. Mamta Banerjee — Minister of Railways.

(c) The date for holding the next meeting of the Inter-State Council has not been fixed as yet. However, a meeting of the Standing Committee of the Inter-state Council is being convened in April, 2000. It may be mentioned that agenda items are first discussed in the standing Committee before those are brought up for discussion in the Inter-State Council.

Licence for Mining Diamonds in M.P.

†*192. SHRI RAGHAVJI: Will the Minister of MINES AND MINERALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Government of Madhya Pradesh had ever sought the permission during the last three years regarding issuance of prospecting licence for the mining of diamonds;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) what was the length of experience of the persons or firms/companies in the field of mining; in favour of whom the State Government had recommended to issue licence;

(d) whether the Central Government had permitted to issue the said licence; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES AND MINERALS (DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA): (a) to (e) Yes, Sir. The State Government of Madhya Pradesh had sent a proposal to the Government of India in November, 1998 seeking Central Government's approval under Section 5(1) of the Mines & Minerals (Development & Regulation) Act, 1957 to the grant of a prospecting licence for airborne geophysical survey, exploration and

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

evaluation of diamond deposits over an area of 4600 sq. kms. in Behradih Block of Raipur district (MP) in favour of M/s. B. Vijaykumar Chhattishgarh Exploration Private Limited, Raipur, a Joint Venture Company (JVC) of State Government of Madhya Pradesh, MP State Mining Corporation Ltd. and M/s. B. Vijaykumar Technical Services Pvt. Ltd. for a period of three years. As informed by the State Government of Madhya Pradesh, the majority shareholders of the applicant company have long experience and standing in the business of processing raw diamonds and its marketing. The Company has hired technical advisors/consultants from Australia and South Africa, who have an international standing in the field. besides M.P. State mining Corporation Ltd., which has been engaged in mining activities in the State of Madhya Pradesh for several years since its inception in 1962, is also a shareholder in the Joint Venture Company.

2. After examination of the proposal in terms of the guidelines in force, the Central Government have accorded its approval on November 22, 1999 under Section 5(1) of the Mines & Minerals (Development & Regulation) Act, 1957 to the proposal for grant of Prospecting Licence in favour of M/s. B. Vijaykumar Chhattisgarh Exploration Pvt. Ltd. for a period of three years subject to imposition of usual special conditions under Rule 14(3) of Minerals Concession Rules (MCR), 1960 as imposed in other similar PL cases for large area aerial prospecting. The State Government had also sought for the approval of Central Government for imposition of two additional special conditions under Rule 14(3) of MCR, 1960, but the Central Government have not approved the imposition of these two special conditions, which are:—

(i) Payment by the company of 12% of the sale value of diamonds mined in addition to the royalty; and

(ii) Payment of a minimum of Rs. 20 per carat of diamonds sold towards the local area development charges.